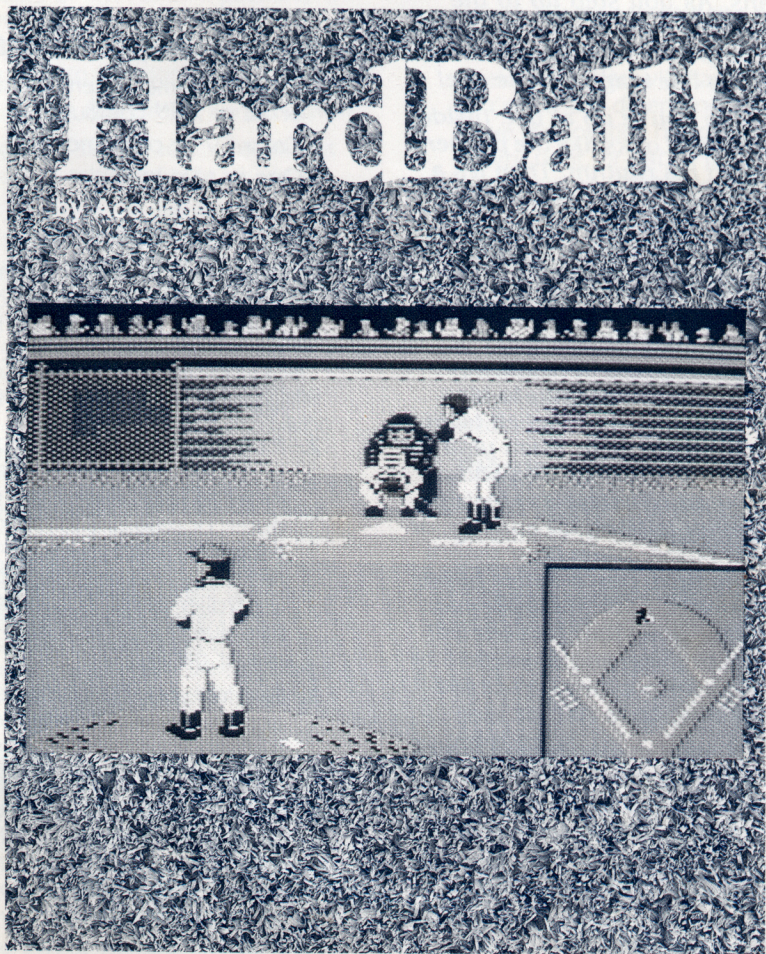# ATARI® XE VIDEO GAME CARTRIDGE

Game Manual

HardBall!™

by Accolade

What a day for a ball game! Sunny skies, cool breeze, the stands packed with your loyal fans. As you step up to the pitcher's mound, you calculate your pitch. Your curveball works like magic. Strike one!

Now you're up at bat. Inside. Ball one! Looks like the pitcher's losing his rhythm. Then it's a low slider! You crack the bat, sending the ball far into left field. You round first and slide into second. "Safe!"

Welcome to HardBall. Playing against the computer or a friend, you'll have the rare opportunity not only to play on a big-league baseball team but to manage it. When your team's at bat, you'll be choosing your offensive strategies — whether to bunt, hit and run, or steal bases. When your team's in the field, you'd better throw strikes, or your manager may replace you. Your fielders will have to think and move fast, or it'll be a long time before the opposing team retires.

As team manager, you'll pick your players, shift the outfielders, adjust the infielders, exchange players, select lefties or righties for the mound, and assign a designated hitter.

So what are you waiting for? Play HardBall!

System Requirements

- Atari XE game system console or XE or XL™ computer
- Color TV or color monitor
- One or two joysticks

Getting Started

1. With your XE game system turned off, insert the HardBall cartridge into the slot on the top of your console, as explained in your Owner's Manual.

2. Plug a joystick into controller port 1 for a one-player game in order to play against the computer; or plug one joystick into controller port 1 (All Stars—the red team) and another into controller port 2 (Champs—the blue team) for a two-player game.

3. Turn on your TV or monitor, and then press **[Power]** to turn on your console. The HardBall title screen appears.

4. Press **[Start]** to go to the Game Options screen. After a few minutes, if you have not selected a game option, a game demonstration will begin.

Play Ball!

5. Select a game option from the Game Options screen. (In a two-player game, use either joystick to choose the game option.) You'll decide which team will be the Home or Visitor team and whether or not you want a designated hitter (–DH). Move the joystick handle up or down to highlight one option at a time. When your choice is highlighted, press the joystick fire button to start the game.

6. If you press [Start] in the middle of a game, you will return to the title screen.

Game Screens

In HardBall, you'll use any one of four screens during game play: Manager's Decision, Pitcher/Batter, Left Field View, and Right Field View.

The Manager's Decision screen gives you a "menu" of decisions for managing your team. When your team's in the field, you can substitute players, exchange positions, position your outfield and infield, and intentionally walk batters. When your team's at bat, you can substitute players or exchange positions. If during a game you want to change your strategies, you can return to the Manager's Decision screen by pressing [Select].

The Pitcher/Batter screen gives you a view from behind the mound. It shows the pitcher, batter, umpire, and fans in the stands. This is where the action begins—where, as pitcher, you select your pitching strategy (type and location) and, as batter, you pick your offensive strategy (batting style and swing location and whether or not to steal bases). On this screen, you'll also find the scoreboard. A bird's-eye view of the game is displayed in the lower right portion of the screen.

The Left Field View and Right Field View screens appear whenever a ball is hit or a batter walks. Here's where you'll position your players to catch the ball and decide where to throw it (first, second, third, or home). A bird's-eye view of the game is displayed in the lower left or right corner of the screen.

Managing Your Team

The game begins with the Manager's Decision screen, where you'll find a preselected lineup for both teams. A checkmark (✓) indicates who's at bat. Who is on which base is indicated by 1b (first), 2b (second), and 3b (third). How each player bats is indicated by R (right), L (left), and S (switch). The lineup also shows each player's position and batting average.

You are given various managing options. You can leave the options as they are and go right to the game by pressing **[Select]**. If you want to change the options, move the joystick handle up or down until the option you want to change is highlighted. Then follow the directions for that particular option.

To change Outfield, Infield, or Intentional Walk, press and release the joystick fire button until your choice is displayed.

To substitute a player from the bench for a player from the roster, press the joystick fire button, and then move the joystick handle up or down until the player from the lineup is highlighted. Next, move the joystick handle right; then select the player from the bench by moving up and down, and press the joystick fire button. The new player will replace the old one at his current position. After the first pitch, once a player is substituted, he can neither return to the lineup nor go to the bench list.

To exchange one player's position for another, follow the directions for substituting a player. If you assign a player to a position for which he is not suited, the computer will let you know. Players out of position will often play poorly and commit errors.

Playing the Game

The pitcher first selects his pitch. Move the joystick handle in the direction of the type of pitch you want, as displayed on the screen. At any one time, you'll have up to four different pitches out of the following list from which to choose.

Fastball! Straight and very fast.

Fastball Straight and fast.

Offspeed Straight.

Changeup Straight slow pitch.

Curveball Big sweeping curve. For left-handed pitchers, the ball curves to the right. For right-handed pitchers, the ball curves to the left.

Screwball   Opposite of curve-ball. For left-handed pitchers, the ball curves to the left. For right-handed pitchers, the ball curves to the right.

Sinker   Ball drops, curves down.

Slider   Similar to curveball but curves at last minute.

The team at bat then chooses its offensive strategy. To swing away, just press the fire button. To bunt, move the joystick handle down, and press the fire button. To steal a base, move the joystick handle up, left, or right, and then press the fire button; the batter will automatically swing away.

Once the team at bat's options are selected, the pitcher must locate the pitch (high, low, inside, or outside). To do so, move the joystick handle in the direction dis-played on the screen (watch the catcher!), and press the fire but-ton. The pitcher's windup begins after you release the button.

As the pitch sails toward the batter, the batter must quickly decide how to swing (high, low, inside, or outside). To do so, hold the joystick handle in the direc-tion displayed on the screen. To swing, press the fire button. You can also just press the fire button to swing without choosing a type of swing. (If a pitch is not in the strike zone, the batter can swing, but he can't hit the ball.)

When the ball is hit, the receiving fielder will flash. If you're on the defending team, move the joystick handle up, down, right, or left to position the fielder to catch the ball. When he catches the ball, decide where you want him to throw it (first, second, third, or home). To do so, quickly move the joystick handle to the option displayed at the bottom of the screen, and press the fire button. Multiple throws are allowed, so don't waste precious time!

Playing Tips

As a pitcher gets tired, the probability of throwing a strike goes down.

Certain pitchers will be stronger in some pitching types.

When bunting with two strikes against you, if the ball goes foul, it's considered your third strike.

Runners have the option of running to the next base if they reach a base after a hit.

If you tell a runner to steal a base and the batter doesn't hit the ball, the catcher will try to throw the lead runner out.

Scoring

As in a real baseball game, the team with the highest number of runs after nine innings wins the game. But who knows? If the game is tied at the end of the ninth, it could be a long day—or night—at the ballpark.